

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JIDDA 03071 011028Z

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ACTION CU-03

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FM AMEMBASSY JIDDA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1077

INFO AMCONSUL DHAHRAN

C O N F I D E N T I A L JIDDA 3071

E.O.: 11652: GDS

TAGS: OEXC (F-H COMMISSION FOR SAUDI ARABIA), SA, US

SUBJ: FULBRIGHT-HAYES COMMISSION: TOO EARLY

REF : STATE 89083

BEGIN SUMMARY: EMBASSY WOULD WELCOME FULBRIGHT-HAYES COMMISSION FOR SAUDI ARABIA PARTICULARLY IN LIGHT OF RECENT REQUESTS THROUGH ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR MASSIVE RECRUITMENT IN BOTH HIGHER AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION SECTORS. HOWEVER, FORCING PACE OF SAUDI CHANGE ON VISA RULES COULD WELL HAZARD WHOLE PROCESS OF CHANGE NOW UNDERWAY. REQUEST APPROACH ON F-H IDEA BE DEFERRED UNTIL 1976. END SUMMARY

1. EXPLORATION OF FULBRIGHT-HAYES COMMISSION FOR SAUDI ARABIA HAS BEEN DONE INFORMALLY WITH SAUDI COORDINATOR OF ECONOMIC COMMISSION, DR. SULAIM, WHO HAS BEEN KEY ADVOCATE OF MODERNIZING SAUDI PRACTICES IN ISSUANCE OF VISAS. MATTER WAS DISCUSSED BY ECONOMIC COUNSELOR IN PRESENCE OF USIS RIYADH CENTER DIRECTOR BERNIER AND ECONOMIC COMMISSION LIAISON OFFICER MCARTHUR APRIL 27. REFERENCE MADE TO REQUESTS FOR LARGE NUMBER OF FACULTY MEMBERS FOR BOTH HIGHER EDUCATION AND VOCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS.

2. SOLAIM IMMEDIATELY REACTED TO IDEA THAT FORMAL REASSURANCES MIGHT HAVE TO BE SOUGHT FROM SAG AT THIS MOMENT CONCERNING REMOVAL OF ALL RESTRAINTS ON ENTRY
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INTO SAUDI ARABIA. THERE WERE SECURITY RISKS, REAL RISKS,

THAT WOULD BE RAISED BY THE MINISTRY OF INTERIOR IN
ADOPTING COMPLETELY NON-DISCRIMINATORY VISA PRACTICES.
HE POINTED OUT THAT WHILE ECONOMIC COMMISSION EXPERTS AND
NEWSMEN NOW BEING GIVEN TACITLY FREE ENTRY WITHOUT REGARD
TO RELIGION, FORMAL PLEDGE OF CHANGE BY SAG WOULD BE
SOMETHING ELSE, PARTICULARLY FOR RESIDENT FACULTY TO BE
RECRUITED UNDER F-H AUSPICES. THIS DID NOT MEAN THAT
SOME RESIDENT FACULTY MIGHT NOT BE POSSIBLE IN THE
NEAR FUTURE BUT HE PREFERRED THAT CONFRONTATION ON
THIS ISSUE BY FORMAL APPROACH ON BASIS OF ESTABLISHING
F-H BE AVOIDED. CHANGE WILL COME, BUT IT WILL BE DELAYED
IF IT IS PUSHED TOO FAST AND PUBLICLY AND WHOLE PROCESS
OF CHANGE MIGHT BE HAZARDED IN SUCH A CASE.

3. EMBASSY RECOMMENDS PLACING F-H PROPOSAL IN SUSPENSE FOR
MOMENT AND WAIT AT LEAST UNTIL 1976 BEFORE REOPENING.
AKINS

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